

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY China

SUBJECT Famine in the Canton Area

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- 25X1 1. "According to an old Chinese merchant [redacted]
25X1 [redacted] a famine situation definitely exists in the general Canton area.
25X1 During [redacted] visit to Canton last winter, he witnessed about 85 bodies
25X1 picked up in the streets. They all died from hunger. Many famine refugees
the outlying districts were roaming the streets of Canton. Some of
them even came from Hunan province looking for food in Canton.
2. The cause of famine, however, was not shortage of food product, in the opinion of this old merchant. He attributed it rather to the failure of land reform which should not cause any hardship itself. But it worked out contrary to the calculation of the Red authorities in the following manner: Whatever the rich landowners produced had been seized and confiscated. The poor tenant farmers acquired a few pieces of land but could not borrow seeds and money for fertilizer from the rich who had become poor themselves. The net result was that a lot of farm land was laid waste. And the poor as well as the rich all suffer under this new system. All are empty-handed and empty-stomached."

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